



Legislation Text

File #: EDA M2019-015, **Version:** 1

DATE: March 21, 2019

TO: Members of the Economic Development Authority

FROM: Nate Carlson, Economic Development Coordinator
Mikayla Schmidt, Community Development Specialist

Consider motion to approve draft RFP for consulting services

SUMMARY AND ACTION REQUESTED:

The EDA shall make a motion to approve the draft RFP for consulting services with a budget up to \$10,000 and begin soliciting consultants.

BACKGROUND:

The Northfield EDA Socio-Economic Sub-Committee has met three times over the course of the past six months. The membership of the committee consists of EDA Members Jessica Peterson-White, Rachel Leatham, and Vice President Andrew Ehrmann; Staff members Nate Carlson and Mikayla Schmidt; Human Rights Commissioner Mar Valdecantos. The Committee charge is to “address current conditions for minority, women and veteran owned business” in Northfield.

Over the course of the past three meetings, Committee members have discussed the work plan and objectives of the Committee. Committee members have agreed that it is imperative that information gathering be conducted prior to any Committee recommendations for new services and/or programs be offered by the EDA. The Committee also agreed that addressing conditions for minority/immigrant/foreign-born business owners is the most urgent area of concern.

The Committee reviewed the “Prosperity Initiative” program that is being offered by the Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation (SMIF). The program was designed to offer business coaching to Southeast Minnesota minority-owned businesses. The Committee invited the program representative, Chad Poitra, to a meeting to discuss the program. Staff and Committee members appreciated the program as an opportunity to potentially partner with SMIF on the issue of gauging current conditions for minority-owned businesses.

Unfortunately, staff received notice from Mr. Poitra that due to program funding being cut by SMIF that he had resigned from his position. However, he offered consulting services to conduct information gathering for the Committee. Committee members and staff reviewed the proposal submitted by Mr. Poitra and agreed that enlisting a third party to assist with information gathering from minority-owned businesses would further the Committee’s work. Committee members proposed that a Request For Proposal (RFP) be drafted and solicited to potential consultants. The Committee has proposed the following to the EDA Board:

- \$5,000 minimum budget with potential add-ons up to \$10,000 for consultant services
- Consultant will gather information from local minority, immigrant, or foreign-born business owners/entrepreneurs regarding current barriers that exist.
- Conduct listening sessions with business owners/entrepreneurs.
- Propose services/programs that the EDA could offer once information is received.

The Committee met on March 12 to finalize the draft RFP for Board approval. Board members can find the draft RFP attached to this report. The Committee will gather proposals and bring forward three finalists for the Board to choose.

ANALYSIS:

The EDA Board has made the mission of the Socio-Economic Committee a strategic goal for the current work plan. Funding for this project is available through the 2019 Budget line item labeled "Other Projects." Currently, \$45,000 is available for this line item. Other potential uses for these funds include title work for land acquisition of the "Q"-block, planning processes related to the Northwest area, and/or consulting services for small area planning of redevelopment areas.

OPTIONS:

The EDA Board has the following options:

- Make a motion to approve the draft RFP for consulting services with a budget up to \$10,000 and begin soliciting consultants.
- Request further information from committee members to be discussed at a later meeting date.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the EDA make a motion to approve the draft RFP.